



# THE COACHING AND SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This guidance will help you understand what “best practice” is when coaching children in aikido. It also covers essential areas such as supervision/coaching ratios, collection of children and changing room guidance. The terms “coach” and “instructor” are deemed to mean the same thing. Throughout this document the Aikido Alliance UK is referred to as the “Alliance”.

## THE ALLIANCE CODE OF CONDUCT

**This code applies to all those coaching, instructing and helping with aikido sessions for under 18s**

Coaches, Assistants and Helpers will:

- At all times adhere to the Alliance’s Child Safeguarding Policy and follow its supporting procedures and guidance
- Adhere to the requirements of all other mandatory policies and requirements e.g. Coaching qualifications, Insurance and, where applicable, DBS checks
- Raise concerns about behaviour by instructors, volunteers, and others, which may be harmful to those in their care, without prejudice to their own position. This duty also relates to concerns about any child’s behaviour that could harm or cause harm to themselves or others,
- Refer all concerns of a child safeguarding nature in line with the Alliance’s Child Safeguarding procedures and related guidance.
- Consistently display high standards of behaviour and appearance.
- Never exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward. In particular, coaches must not use their position to establish or pursue a sexual or improper relationship with a participant under 18 (including their close friends and relatives).
- Treat all information of a personal nature about individual aikidoka as confidential except in circumstances where to do so will allow the child to be placed at risk of harm or continue to be at risk of harm.
- Encourage all aikidoka to obey the spirit of the rules both on and off the mat.
- Continue to seek and maintain their own professional development in all areas in relation to coaching children.
- Co-operate fully with other specialists (e.g. other coaches, officials, doctors, and physiotherapists) in the best interests of the young aikidoka.
- Never encourage aikidoka, volunteers, officials or parents to violate the rules of the club or the martial art and report any violations appropriately.
- Observe the authority and the decision of officials and other instructors and only question those decisions in the appropriate manner.

## COACHING AND RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST

The term, “Relationship of Trust” is used to describe the unequal relationship that exists between people of different status in particular circumstances, as a result of which one of the parties could be seen as being vulnerable, such as doctor/patient, teacher/pupil, coach/athlete.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states:

*“It is an offence for a person aged 18 years or over to involve a child under that age in sexual activity where he or she is in a specified position of trust in relation to that child. This includes those who care for, advise, supervise or train children”.*

This does not currently apply in law to sports coaches but the Alliance adopts the Home Office guidelines which recommend that people in positions of trust and authority do not have sexual relationships with 16 – 17 year olds in their care.

The Alliance’s mandatory requirement is therefore that:

**Coaches and other people in positions of trust and authority do not have – or seek to have – sexual or other inappropriate relationships with 16–17 year olds in their care.**

The power and influence that a coach has in a professional relationship with a child cannot be underestimated. In practical terms this means that if any coach, official or assistant in a position of trust over a child aged 16/17 forms a sexual or other intimate relationship with that child they will breach the Alliance’s policy and action will be taken.

It is therefore important that when any such a relationship is suspected the affiliated club’s Welfare Officer should contact the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer who will, if appropriate, refer the concern for consideration before considering disciplinary action. (The WO should contact the LADO or other statutory agency direct, if to contact the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer would cause unnecessary delay and leave a child at risk of possible harm. This route should also be taken if the concern raised involves the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer)

Additionally, all officers and coaches in Aikido should be aware that any sexual relationship between a child under 16 years of age with any adult is an offence and must always be reported to the police for action. It should also be remembered that any sexual activity that is not freely consented to is criminal.

Although children of 16 or 17 can legally consent to some types of sexual activity, they may still be relatively immature emotionally. In many areas of the law, for example the right to vote or the provisions of the Children Act 1989, they are still classed as children.

## COACHING GOOD PRACTICE

It is essential that all those involved with children in Aikido clubs in whatever capacity follow good practice at all times to minimise the risk of harm. This includes exhibiting exemplary behaviour, adherence to the Alliance’s codes of conduct and following the guidance in this document.

#### ALLIANCE COACHES, ASSISTANTS AND HELPERS SHOULD:

- Ensure they remain up to date in their qualifications and maintain necessary club/association membership and insurance requirements.
- Complete a criminal records check (and barred list check where eligible) prior to commencement in a new post and update that check every 3 years (this can also be done via the DBS Update Service).
- Be familiar with the Alliance's Safeguarding Policy and related procedures
- Ensure that parents and young aikidoka obtain appropriate information regarding training sessions and events.
- Not exceed the level of their competence and qualifications.
- Ensure that activities are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of the young aikidoka in their care.
- Promote honesty, fairness and teamwork.
- Follow the Alliance's guidance on coaching young people.
- Report any concerns in relation to young people (see guidance document on Responding to Concerns and Allegations)
- Recognise the expectations on children and young people to undertake other activities outside of aikido including the demands of school sports, school examinations and other club activities.

#### ALLIANCE COACHES, ASSISTANTS AND HELPERS SHOULD NOT:

- Take children to their homes or other secluded places where they will be alone which a child or children.
- Spend time alone with a child unless to fail to do so places the child at risk of harm i.e. if a child is left alone by a parent/carer's failure to collect them.
- Transport a child alone except in an emergency (when a child needs to go to hospital and it is not possible to gain the presence of another adult or alternative transport in any other way and to fail to do so would cause the child likely harm.)
- Leave the training venue before all children and young people have been collected by a designated adult (i.e. parent or carer) or are continuing to be supervised by appropriate club officers.

#### NEVER:

- engage in rough physical play or horse play or sexually provocative games.
- make sexually suggestive comments to a child even if done in "fun"
- allow a child to engage in inappropriate touching
- use inappropriate language to or in front of a child
- allow a child to use inappropriate language
- do things that are personal in nature for a child that they can do for themselves e.g. toileting.
- use such behaviour as to reduce a child to tears or to display significant distress
- share a hotel room with a child or invite a child home in the daytime or overnight.
- use inappropriate joint locks on children whose bones and joints have not yet fully developed.
- use pain compliance techniques on a child so as to cause them harm or suffering

- engage in a sexual relationship with an aikidoka under 18. NOTE: Engaging in sexual relations with a child under 16 years of age is a criminal offence.
- smoke or consume alcohol while working with children and young people. This includes instructing whilst smelling of tobacco or alcohol.
- allow allegations by a child to go unreported or not acted upon. (NB: all concerns and disclosures must also be reported to the Alliance's Lead Safeguarding Officer.)

Please note: This is not an exhaustive list.

#### EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE:

- Make aikido fun for all children and promote fair play.
- Always work in an open environment where you can be observed at all times when you are with a child – or children.
- Ensure that all forms of physical contact are provided openly. In Aikido, in order to teach or coach certain techniques effectively, it is sometimes necessary to make physical contact with the child. Parents and children should be made aware of this when they join the class. Their views should always be carefully considered and the child/children themselves should always be consulted and their agreement gained.
- All physical/manual support and instruction should be unambiguous and non-sexual i.e. would not normally be construed as sexual by a reasonable observer.
- Treat all children with respect at all times. Recognise children are individuals and treat them as such, always taking into account their physical development and their emotional well-being
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with children.
- All relationships with children should be based on mutual trust and power and be equal at all times.
- Empower children to be a part of decision making processes as far as possible within aikido.
- When taking children away for a course or event ensure they are accompanied by male and female members of staff and follow the good practice guidelines e.g. <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/away-trips-and-hosting/>
- If a child cries they generally do so because they are hurt or unhappy about something. A coach must assume the child is in distress and act appropriately.
- Ensure you have the written consent of parents to administer first aid if required and have relevant medical information in case of injury or illness
- Allow all children to have breaks from training to use the toilets, for the appropriate taking of food and drink as required for their well-being.
- Keep a written record of injuries that occur along with treatment given and always inform the parents.
- If any of the following occur, immediately report the matter to a colleague and parent at the earliest opportunity and ensure the Welfare Officer is made aware as soon as possible so that they can take any required action:
  - If you accidentally hurt a child in Aikido
  - If a child in your class appears distressed
  - If a child in your class appears sexually aroused by yours or others actions.
  - If a child misunderstands or misinterprets your actions
  -

## THE APPLICATION OF AIKIDO TECHNIQUES WHEN TEACHING CHILDREN

When applying locks, throws, other techniques or exercises on children and young people, care is to be taken to ensure that any such applications are used only in a way as would be considered reasonable and appropriate to the age, stature and ability of the child upon whom the application relates. **'Against the joint' techniques are to be avoided or modified and the application of 'pain' to achieve compliance is not to be used.**

Clubs should ensure that their Junior Syllabus is implemented with under 18s in order to moderate any exercise, technique or other application which may be inappropriate for the children and young people participating. A child's physiology is different to that of an adult, and all coaches working with children should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge in order to deliver safe sessions.

Consult with the Welfare Officer if you wish to invite a young person onto an adult class. Generally speaking, no Junior member under the age of 16 should be allowed to integrate in an adult class. If this is unavoidable then appropriate risk mitigation measure must be implemented.

## COACHING RATIOS

It is important to ensure that, in planning and running aikido classes for children and young people, consideration is given to providing an appropriate staffing/supervision ratio of adults to participants.

This will:

- minimise any risks to participants
- reassure parents/carers
- provide some protection for those responsible for providing, funding or commissioning the activity in the event of concerns or incidents arising.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

Due to the number of potential variables, it is not possible to recommend "one size fits all" guidance to cover all aikido sessions involving children and young people. There are, however, a number of key considerations that are recommended as good practice:

### 1. What makes an individual suitable to supervise children?

It is the responsibility of instructors to ensure the suitability of those running the activity.

This includes:

- being appropriately qualified for their role and the activity
- being subject to a safe recruitment process, including criminal records checks for eligible roles
- having insurance appropriate to their activity
- signing up to comply with a code of practice
- understanding their responsibility to safeguard children

## 2. What factors inform appropriate supervision levels?

- Whatever the recommended ratio of adults to participants is, a minimum of two adults should be present at every session. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of one participant requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).
- In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that may be required (for example of equipment or for Health and Safety purposes), a risk assessment should be undertaken which specifically informs decision-making about appropriate supervision levels. Key factors to assess include:
  - Ages of children
  - Additional supervision/support needs of some or all participants (for example due to disability or age)
  - Competence/experience of participants for the specific activity
  - Nature of activity (for example a seminar with lots of excited children doing a variety of activities might need higher supervision than just a normal class)
  - Nature of the venue – is it private and exclusive to the group or open and accessible to the public; and what types of equipment children may have access to; what hazards are present.

### Recommended minimum supervision ratios

Child's age	No of adults	No of children
5 – 8	2	12
9 – 12	2	16
13 – 18	2	20

You will see from the above table that a minimum of two adults should be present. This ensures at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity (e.g. in the event of a child requiring the attention of an adult during the activity following an accident).

Please note that the table above shows minimum standards and these may need to be adjusted. In all instances the class (both content and participants) should be risk assessed. For example, a whole class of beginners aged 7 learning to do breakfalls might be risk assessed as needing a higher level of supervision. In all instances the welfare of the children should be the priority and every child must receive the protection to which they are legally entitled.

Although the Alliance encourages parents/carers to accompany children to activities, we do not recommend that Clubs include carers in supervision calculations, unless the carers/parents are acting in a formal volunteering or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, this should mean that those parents/carers meet all appropriate requirements in terms of:

- appropriate recruitment checks
- clarity about their role
- who has overall responsibility for the group
- what is acceptable practice

Key principles that are recommended as good practice:

- ensure that all those running the activity are suitable to do so i.e.
  - have been recruited in accordance with this policy
  - have insurance appropriate to their activity
  - be aware of relevant codes of practice
  - have appropriate qualification for the activity
  - have an understanding of their responsibility to safeguard children

Allowing any under 18's to help out in junior classes should be part of developing a young person's sense of belonging and responsibility. You should not depend on them to take full responsibility for managing a group of children. Under 18s can only supplement the adult coaches in terms of supervising the activity

## VULNERABLE CHILDREN

All children are vulnerable but through research we know some groups of children are more vulnerable than others

## CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Deaf and disabled are more likely to be vulnerable because they may:

- Have fewer outside contacts than other children
- Lack access to peers to discover what is acceptable behaviour.
- Receive intimate personal care, possibly from a number of carers, which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour, and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries.
- Have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse.
- Have communication difficulties which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening.
- Be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing involvement in the sport
- Be especially vulnerable to bullying and intimidation and be more vulnerable than other children to abuse by their peers.
- Be subject to the prejudices and/or misconceptions of others e.g. about their 'attractiveness' to potential abusers
- Have medical needs that are used to explain abuse.



## CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ABUSE OR HARM

Sport can play an important part in developing a child's self-esteem and confidence including when the child has suffered abuse or harm. The importance of clubs being inclusive to all such children cannot be over emphasised. However a child entering, remaining in or returning to a club after such an incident can be a challenge to the WO, coaches and others.

It is therefore important that the WO is given relevant information, to be shared in confidence and on a "need to know" basis, with other club officers as deemed appropriate (e.g. the coach). It is likely such information will come from parents/guardians/carers and professionals involved with the child. The WO can also gain support and guidance from the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Club Welfare Officers need to be aware of possible problems that may occur and how to act upon them. For example a child who has suffered abuse may appear fearful of adults, particularly to a person of the same sex as the abuser and consideration must be given to who is placed in a position of trust over the child within the Aikido club. A child who has suffered sexual abuse may exhibit sexualized behaviour or use overtly sexualized language and may be unable to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by adults towards them. This makes the child vulnerable to further abuse and advice must be sought from professional involved on how to deal such situations appropriately and sensitively.

This is not an exhaustive list of potential areas that need to be considered, and each situation must be considered individually.

## CHILDREN FROM MINORITY ETHNIC GROUPS

Children from minority ethnic groups are additionally vulnerable because they may be:

- Experiencing racism and racist attitudes.
- Afraid of further abuse if they challenge others.
- Subjected to myths, e.g. all people of a particular culture hit their children so that's OK
- Wanting to fit in and not make a fuss.
- Using or learning English as a second language.

## CHILDREN WHO TAKE ON LEADERSHIP ROLES

Taking on a leadership role within Aikido is intended to be an enjoyable and positive experience. However, coaches and parents in Aikido may lose sight of the fact that an individual in a leadership role who is under 18 is still legally a child and they are themselves subject to this safeguarding policy.

## GUIDANCE: CHILDREN AND ADULTS ON THE MAT TOGETHER

Within Aikido children and adults may at times be on the mat together. The basis of this decision may be to help develop children's skills by being on the mat with their more experienced elders or for operational reasons such as access to training facilities. Whatever the reason, the club coach will need to assess what is appropriate in terms of such activity e.g. a small child age 10 with a large adult male could put the child at considerable risk of harm physically but a mature child of 17 and an adult may not.

The coach must always be aware of the potential for abuse in any situation. Sport is known to be targeted by people who wish to harm children and should a concern be raised about an adult participant the coach involved at the time or any concerned person must report it to the WO. Additionally when adults and children are on the mat together the coach must pay particular attention to whether both parties are acting appropriately within the rules and requirements of the club. Any concerns should be challenged and reported to the Club Welfare Officer. Also be aware children can be a risk to other children and may also seek to harm another child participant by their actions on the mat.

When adults and children are on the mat together, the Instructor must be fully aware of, and clearly identify to the adults:

- those children present, and
- the limitations of applying locks and other techniques on Juniors

Parents and children must also be made aware if the child will at times be on the mat together with an adult club member. In advance of this happening, and ideally when a child joins the club, the child and parent must be made aware that physical contact is an essential part of the sport and at times accidents can happen i.e. a grab for a particular hold may mean the child is touched inappropriately by mistake e.g. a young girl on the breast area. This is an inherent risk of the sport and as such must be acknowledged and recognised. However all parents and children still have the right to raise a concern and if such an "accident" is repeated over time then concerns should be raised about that individual to the WO and consideration given to the individual's skills, intention and motivation.

DBS checks may also be required if children (under 18s) are present in a class.

## DRESS CODE

Aikido is a dynamic and interactive activity and, as such, all clothing worn by junior aikidoka should be:

- fit for purpose (for the activity in question).
- compliant with safeguarding principles. (e.g. T shirts to be worn under gi tops, sports bras for growing girls)

During all training sessions:

- Training suits (gi or dogi) should be of the correct size. For example, trousers which are too long may be hazardous and cause trips or falls. Clothing which is too tight may restrict movement. Clothing which is too loose may fall open or fall down.

- Belts (obi) should also be of an appropriate length so as not to be hazardous to the wearer or other students.
- Training attire should cover vulnerable areas of the body such as knees and elbows.
- No jewellery (rings, earrings, bracelets, watches and studs) should be worn during training or competition sessions. Jewellery which cannot be removed for any reason should be covered with appropriate tape if it is considered a hazard to the child or to others on the mat (check for allergies and permission before taping).
- In the event of athlete's foot, verrucae or any other contagious foot problem, socks should be worn. Please be aware that socks may not allow as much grip with the floor – and so, where possible, neoprene or other 'grippy' activity socks should be used.
- Girls and female teenagers wearing dogi should also wear plain – preferably white – T-shirts underneath their jackets. Sports bras may also be appropriate for developing girls. Gi trousers must always be worn underneath hakama.

The instructor should not adjust the dress of any child unless not to do so would be hazardous to the child or other children taking part, or if it is necessary to protect the modesty of the child. Wherever possible the child should be guided to adjust their own dress, or their parents should assist if they are present. If, despite this, adjusting a child's dress is necessary (such as knotting a belt or securing trouser ties) then the instructor should do so to the side of the training area whilst also ensuring they remain in open view. Where possible, a female coach or helper should adjust the dress of a female child and vice-versa. An instructor should never take a child out of the area / out of sight to adjust clothing.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

All those running aikido sessions for children and young people should

1. have contact details of all children including emergency contact details for parents, carers or other designated/nominated persons to contact
2. have medical/health information for all children and ensure this information is available to relevant people
3. undertake regular risk assessments of both the training area and the aikido activities. For example, very young children and beginners may need a higher level of supervision; some activities may require more space. Consider the need for a beginner to make a mistake without it endangering them or other participants.
4. ensure that all those involved in the junior sections are aware of the Alliance's safeguarding policy.
5. be aware of the Missing Child Policy and action to take
6. be aware of the late collection guidance and never leave a child alone should their parents/carers fail to collect them
7. ensure children follow guidelines on safe dress e.g. to remove jewellery that may injure self or others
8. be aware of medical conditions which may need risk assessments e.g. verrucae
9. consider the safe use of spectacles
10. carry out a verbal screening at the start of each session to check if any child may be ill or injured
11. have access to first aid provision. The nature of this will depend on the venue being used (e.g. Leisure Centres often require clubs to use their first aiders).

12. only deal with first aid matters which they are competent to do so.
13. be aware of emergency procedures and fire drills
14. consider if parents should be asked to stay for the duration of the session. This may be necessary in order to support certain children e.g. with medical requirements or behavioural issues

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

## COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Making robust arrangements to monitor the collection of children at the end of the session can be very challenging.

All Alliance affiliated clubs have a duty of care to ensure that children are collected by the right people.

**Arrangements should be clearly stated when children join the club so that parents are aware of their obligations as part of this.**

There is no legal age at which a child can make their own way home. There is a general consensus that no child under 8 should be allowed to walk home alone – and children of this age or below should always be collected by a parent or other designated adult.

<b>5 to 6</b>	Year 1	KS1	Alliance policy is that in most circumstances children under the age of 10 should be collected by a parent or designated adult. With regard to children aged 10 and above, parents need to decide whether their child is ready for the responsibility of walking to and from training alone (or with other children).
<b>6 to 7</b>	Year 2	KS1	
<b>7 to 8</b>	Year 3	KS2	
<b>8 to 9</b>	Year 4	KS2	
<b>9 to 10</b>	Year 5	KS2	
<b>10 to 11</b>	Year 6	KS2	
<b>11 to 12</b>	Year 7	KS3	If parents decide they will not be collecting their children then written consent should be obtained to allow the club to let the child leave alone.
<b>12 to 13</b>	Year 8	KS3	
<b>13 to 14</b>	Year 9	KS3	
<b>14 to 15</b>	Year 10	KS4	
<b>15 to 16</b>	Year 11	KS4	
			Parents may already have considered these issues when considering if their child can walk to school. However there may be other factors to consider for an aikido class (such as location and time of day).

The following areas should be considered.

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#### PARENTS

Parents can specify if they are happy for their child to make their own way home.

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#### PASSWORD

When a child joins the club you could ask the parent/carer if they wish to create a password which must be given by anyone wishing to collect their child.

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#### MONITORS

You could use a class helper or instructor to monitor the exit to ensure that children don't slip out unnoticed. Clubs often have large numbers of children on the mat, and all of them will be leaving at the same time. Having someone 'on the door' is a useful way of controlling this.

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#### CLASS REGISTER

Alliance affiliated clubs should have a register of children attending each class. This can be used to 'tick off' when a child is collected. Or, the parent could be asked (by the exit Monitor) to sign when collecting their child.

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#### AGE LIMITS

It is best practice that no person under the age of 16 years be the designated person collecting a child

All Alliance affiliated clubs have a "duty of care", which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that relevant junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. a child member should not be left unsupervised if a parent is late.

Best practice is to make all child members and their parents aware that if they are not collected by a parent then they should make that known to the WO, coach or other appropriate adult, and for the nominated individual to ensure that the child member is supervised appropriately until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements.

#### UNFIT TO COLLECT

If the club feels that the parent/carer collecting a child may be under the influence of either alcohol or drugs and the safety and wellbeing of the child may be compromised, the instructor / member of the Welfare Team should assess the situation. If the club feels that the parent/carer is unable to take responsibility for the child they must take appropriate action. This could include contacting another member of the family to collect the child. If another family member is not available then Children's Social Care or the Police will need to be contacted.

## ACCESS TO THE CHILD

Unless there is a court order, in place a club should not (cannot) deny a parent access to their child

If there is concern about violent or aggressive behaviour from either parent the club should recommend that the child does not attend until the problems have been resolved, thereby ensuring the safety of all children. If anyone in the club feels that a child could be at risk due to behaviour observed then it is essential that this is reported (see Responding to Concerns).

If a parent arrives to collect a child and the club officers are concerned at their ability to take appropriate care of the child (i.e. they are considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the level where they are unfit to drive, and/or take care of their child) the club should gain advice from their local safeguarding team – or the police.

**If you feel a child is at immediate risk of harm Dial 999.**

## UNKNOWN COLLECTOR

Clubs should not allow an unknown person to collect any child club without prior, written, permission from the child's parent or guardian.

## LATE COLLECTION OR FAILURE TO COLLECT

On occasions parents may be delayed and unable to collect their child from training or after an event. The list of emergency numbers for the parents is to be used in such situations.

Parents should be asked to inform the appropriate club officer if they are delayed with a clear guidance on what the club will be required to do i.e. the parent must give consent if they wish another parent to transport their child home.

The club officers must never leave a child alone unless they are over 16 and then only with parents' permission. It is recognised some children aged 16 and over will take themselves home so the club officer must assess situations as they arise in an appropriate manner.

Until a child is collected (to maintain the wellbeing of all concerned) two appropriate club officers or parents must remain with the child.

There may be some circumstances where a coach has no option but to remain alone with a child awaiting collection. If this happens then ensure you are in an open area and ring another adult to advise them of the situation. It is clearly better for the child to have a single appropriate adult waiting with them, than no adult at all.

Parents who persistently fail to collect a child member on time or have not arrived after a reasonable period of time, and have given no prior notice or informed the club they are delayed, may be failing in their care of their child. The club should use the emergency numbers they have for the child to try to arrange for

a nominated person to collect their child. If no one nominated is available, and the parent has still not contacted the club officers after a reasonable period of time the club should consult the police or Children's Social Care Team duty officer for advice on action to take.

If a parent arrives to collect a child and the club officers are concerned at their ability to take appropriate care of the child (i.e. they are considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs to the level where they are unfit to drive, and/or take care of their child) the club should gain advice from their local safeguarding team.

When a parent/carer fails to collect a child on time the club should:

- Attempt to contact the parent/carer – from the information sheet completed on joining/renewing membership.
- Attempt to contact the emergency contact person nominated
- If there is no reply from the emergency contact, ask the child if there is another family member who may be contacted
- Wait with the child/children at the club with at least one other Official/coach/ teacher/volunteers or parents.
- If no one is reachable, contact the local police to enquire about the best course of action. Please be aware that the child may be anxious (e.g. that there may have been an accident) so contact with the police should be made discreetly.
- Remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection.
- The club coaches and officers should avoid:
  - Taking the child home or to another location.
  - Asking the child to wait in a vehicle or the club with them alone.
  - Sending the child home with another person without permission.

## TOILET BREAKS

Adults (non parents) who haven't previously volunteered and who haven't had the necessary vetting checks, should not be left alone with children or take them to the toilet unaccompanied.

It therefore may be necessary, in larger groups of children, to encourage bigger groups to take a comfort break together

The recommended number of toilet facilities for children are

- children over five years old: one toilet per ten children

If the group has children of mixed genders, there should be at least one responsible, appropriately checked adult of each gender supervising visits to the toilet.

## CHANGING ROOMS

A major consideration is whether or not the facilities will be used exclusively by the Club. The advantage of this type of arrangement is that it removes any concerns arising from children mixing with adults when changing or showering.

However, many changing facilities are also used by other adults (e.g. at Leisure Centres). In these circumstances there is a need for additional steps to be taken to ensure adequate supervision of the children while changing. This will avoid risks associated with mixed-facility use and to prevent or reduce opportunities for unwanted contact between the young people and adults when changing or showering.

In many clubs children and adults come changed ready to undertake their training session. However, this policy is relevant to those clubs where changing rooms are used by club members under 18 years of age.

- Ensure that parents are made aware that changing facilities at venues may be shared by both club members and members of the general public.
- Ensure parents are made aware of the type of changing rooms i.e. separate areas for male and female, or changing 'villages'
- Ensure the expected behaviour of your child members in changing rooms is known to the child members and their parents.
- Ensure parents are aware they should not be in the changing room while their child is changing unless the child is of an age where help is required from parents, or the child requires additional specific assistance. This is generally at an age that is stipulated by the venue hirer, usually 7 or 8 years of age. In such circumstances the parent must be same gender as the child, unless the facility has family changing facilities or is a "mixed changing village".

**Coaches should not change with (i.e. at the same time in the presence of) their junior members.**

It is important for staff/volunteers to balance the need for adequate supervision with the need to ensure young children are afforded appropriate levels of privacy.

All facilities should have a safeguarding policy and procedures for reporting any concerns and staff/volunteers are advised to familiarise themselves with these at the outset.

## OTHER ADULTS USING THE CHANGING ROOMS AT THE SAME TIME AS CHILDREN

Ideally groups of children and young people should have sole use of changing facilities.

**Alliance Instructors, Assistants and Helpers MUST NOT change with their junior students**

Other points to consider:

- children and young people may opt to change at home before they arrive for the activity. Remember that many children and young people are very self-conscious and anxious about undressing in front of others. Always offer the option of changing at home.
- Supervision in the changing facility may be necessary when children are too young to be left alone or change themselves. Encourage children to arrive dressed in their kit.



- Most children of school age may be capable of changing their clothes
- If the group includes disabled children who require additional support and assistance with changing this should be undertaken by their parent or professional carer whenever possible.
- there are concerns about bullying, fighting or other troublesome behaviours taking place which need to be managed.

## PARENTS AS SUPERVISORS

Parents are often involved in supervising children during aikido sessions. Where they are responsible only for their own child (or by agreement their relatives' or friends' child/ren) this constitutes a private arrangement outside the responsibility of the Club. However, when parents undertake a formal supervisory role at the request of or with the agreement of the organiser which includes having responsibility for other people's children, the same steps should be taken to establish their suitability as for any other supervisory position.

## BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

The following should be adopted, wherever possible:

- Adults must not change at the same time using the same facility as children
- Coaches should change early so as to be ready when the session starts.
- Mixed genders must have access to separate male and female changing rooms
- Mobile phones must not be used in changing rooms
- If children are uncomfortable changing at the club, no pressure should be placed on them to do so. Instead, suggest they change at home.

## RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A CLUB SESSION

The issue of club responsibility during training sessions when a child uses the toilets or changing rooms has been raised on several occasions. The Alliance's view is that while a child is training she/he remains under the responsibility, under the duty of care, of the person who is teaching/coaching him/her at that time on behalf of the club. If a young aikidoka steps off the mat, the coach should be aware of this. If she/he fails to return in a reasonable time, or appears upset upon leaving/returning the coach should request a suitable club official to ensure that he/she is all right.

If you are at an away event then getting changed before and after the session could be seen as part of that session. This means that the Club is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the children during that time. If children are arriving for a local training session then the Club's responsibility begins when the session starts - and finishes when the children leave into the care of their parents/carers.

If a complaint is received that an incident has occurred in the changing room the club has a duty to act upon that concern and investigate appropriately. If the incident involves a person not associated with the

club, the facility manager should be made aware and consideration given as to whether the statutory agencies need informing.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER A SESSION IS COMPLETED

Alliance policy is that each affiliated club has a “duty of care” to child members, which extends to an awareness on the part of the club that their junior members have been collected, in so far as is possible, at the conclusion of a session, i.e. a child member should not be left unsupervised if a parent is late. This has to be age-appropriate, i.e. 17 year olds are more than likely capable of getting themselves home, but a 12 year old is not. However, if a club uses changing rooms that are also accessible to non-club members it would be extreme to expect a club to search the changing areas in case a junior club member was there.

Best practice would be for a club to make all child members and their parents aware that if they are not collected by a parent then they should make that known to the CWO, coach or whoever a club deem to be appropriate, and for the nominated individual to ensure that the child member is supervised appropriately until a parent arrives or the parent communicates alternative arrangements.

## MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

These guidelines aim to promote good practice and to encourage a proactive response to supporting children to manage their own behaviour. They suggest some strategies and sanctions which can be used and also identify unacceptable sanctions or interventions which must never be used by staff or volunteers.

These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- All those involved in activities (including children, coaches/volunteers and parents/carers) should be provided with clear guidelines about required standards of conduct, and the organisation/club’s process for responding to behaviour that is deemed unacceptable.
- Children must never be subject to any form of treatment that is harmful, abusive, humiliating or degrading.
- Some children may exhibit challenging behaviour as a result of specific circumstances, e.g. a medical or psychological condition, and coaches may therefore require specific or additional guidance. These and any other specific needs the child may have should be discussed with parents/carers and the child in planning for the activity, to ensure that an appropriate approach is agreed and, where necessary, additional support provided.
- Sport can make a significant contribution to improving the life experience and outcomes for all children and young people. Every child should be supported to participate and, only in exceptional circumstances where the safety of a child or of other children cannot be maintained, should a child be excluded from club activities.

## PLANNING ACTIVITIES

When children are identified as having additional needs or behaviours that are likely to require additional supervision, specialist expertise or support, this should be discussed with parents/carers and where appropriate young people. The club should seek to work in partnership with parents/carers, and where necessary external agencies, to ensure that a child or young person can be supported to participate safely.

## AGREEING ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in developing an agreed statement of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (code of conduct) and the range of sanctions which may be applied in response to unacceptable behaviour.

Issues of behaviour and control should be discussed with staff, volunteers, parents and children in the context of rights and responsibilities. When children are asked to draw up a code of conduct that will govern their participation in club activities, they tend to arrive at very sensible “rules” with greater “buy-in” from other children when compared to those simply imposed by adults. If and when such a code is compiled, every member of the group can be asked to sign it, as can new members as they join.

## USEFUL STRATEGIES

In responding to challenging behaviour the response should always be proportionate, be imposed as soon as is practicable and be fully explained to the child and their parents/carers. In dealing with children who display negative or challenging behaviours, staff and volunteers might consider the following options:

- Time out - from the activity, group or individual work.
- Reparation - the act or process of making amends.
- Restitution - the act of giving something back.
- Behavioural reinforcement - rewards for good behaviour, consequences for negative behaviour.
- De-escalation of the situation - talking through with the child.
- Increased supervision by staff/volunteers.
- Use of individual „contracts or agreements for their future or continued participation.
- Sanctions or consequences e.g. missing an outing.
- Seeking additional/specialist support (all require parental consent unless the child is felt to be “at risk” or “in need of protection”).
- Temporary or permanent exclusion

The following should **never** be permitted as a means of managing a child’s behaviour:

- Physical punishment or the threat of such.
- Refusal to speak to or interact with the child.
- Being deprived of food, water, access to changing facilities or toilets or other essential facilities.
- Verbal intimidation, ridicule or humiliation.

## PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

The use of physical intervention should always be avoided unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent a child injuring themselves or others, or causing serious damage to property.

Physical contact to prevent something happening should always be the result of conscious decision-making and not a reaction. Before physically intervening, the member of staff or volunteer should ask themselves, “Is this the only option in order to manage the situation and ensure safety?”

It is good practice to ensure that if you have to physically intervene in a situation with a child/young person, it is in the least restrictive way necessary to prevent them from getting hurt, and used only after all other strategies have been exhausted. Studies have shown that, where this is the case, children and young people understand and accept the reasons for the intervention.

The following must always be considered:

- Contact should be avoided with buttocks, genitals and breasts. Staff/volunteers should never behave in a way which could be interpreted as sexual.
- Any form of physical intervention should achieve an outcome that is in the best interests of the child whose behaviour is of immediate concern.
- Staff/ volunteers should consider the circumstances, the risks associated with employing physical intervention compared with the risks of not employing physical intervention.
- The scale and nature of physical intervention must always be proportionate to the behaviour of the young person and the nature of harm/ damage they might cause.
- All forms of physical intervention should employ only the minimum force needed to avert injury to a person or serious damage to property – applied for the shortest period of time.
- Staff/volunteers should never employ physical interventions which are deemed to present an unreasonable risk to children or staff/volunteers.
- Staff/volunteers shall never use physical intervention as a form of punishment.
- Physical intervention should NOT involve inflicting pain

Any physical intervention used should be recorded as soon as possible after the incident by the staff/volunteers involved using the Incident Report Form and passed to the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

It is clear from the accounts of children and young people that physical intervention provokes strong feelings. Children may be left physically or emotionally hurt. Even a child who hasn't directly been involved in the situation may be fearful that it will happen to them in future or have been upset by seeing what has happened to others.

A timely debrief for staff/volunteers, the child and parents should always take place following an incident where physical intervention has been used. This should include ensuring that the physical and emotional well-being of those involved has been addressed and ongoing support offered where necessary. Staff/volunteers, children and parents should be given an opportunity to talk about what happened in a calm and safe environment.

There should also be a discussion with the child and parents about the child's needs and continued safe participation in the group or activity.

## MISSING CHILD: ACTION TO TAKE

Hopefully no child will ever go missing from your club. If they do, remember most children are found within a few minutes of their disappearance.

However, if a child for whom your club has responsibility does go missing, the following guidelines have been devised to clarify actions that should be taken.

This guidance should be followed at normal club sessions and any away from home events

- Ensure the other children in your care are looked after appropriately while you organise a search for the child concerned.
- Inform the child's parents if they are present, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise them of the concern. Reassure them you are doing all you can to locate their child.
- Organise all available responsible adults to search the immediate local area. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully.
- Search the area in which the child has gone missing including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas and the venue grounds.
- Request all those searching report back to you or a nominated adult at a specific point and by a specified latest time.
- This nominated person should also be making a note of the events, including detailing a physical description of the child including approx. height, build, hair and eye colour as well as clothing he/she was wearing and where he/she was last seen, as this will be required by the police. If the search is unsuccessful you should then report the concern to the police

### **A report should go to the police no later than 30 minutes after the child's disappearance is noted – even if the search is not complete.**

- If the police recommend further action before they get involved, follow their guidance.
- If the police act upon the concern be guided by them in any further actions to take.
- At any stage the child is located ensure that you inform all adults involved including the parents, searchers and police if you have involved them
- Make sure that any other children at the Club are safe and being supervised appropriately throughout the search. Do not allow other children to join in the search.
- Refer the concern as soon as possible to your club Welfare Officer who will inform the Alliance Lead Safeguarding Officer.

## CHANGE LOG
